

UNITED NATIONS: HISTORY & PRINCIPAL ORGANS



The United Nations

- An International Organization
- Founded in 1945 with the purpose to:
 - To maintain international peace and security
 - To promote economic and social development
 - To promote Human Rights
 - Original Members – 51; Present Members – 193.
 - (Latest Member - South Sudan - July 2011)
- Headquarters - in New York



History of the UN

- After World War II - nations were in ruins and world wanted peace
- 50 countries gathered in San Francisco in 1945 to sign a document – The UN Charter - which created an organisation – The United Nations
- The Charter signed on 26 June 1945 by the representatives of 50 countries. Poland signed it later and became one of the original 51 Member States
- Charter came into force/ The UN officially came into existence on 24 October 1945 (24th Oct. - UN day)
- India is a founding member of the United Nations.
- The forerunner of UN was the League of Nations

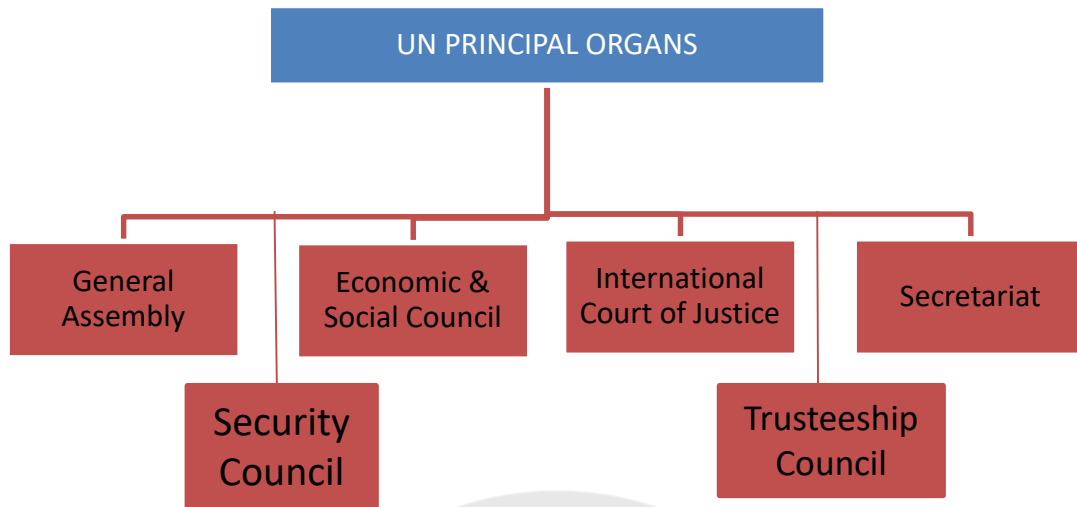
League of Nations

- An organization conceived during First World War
- Established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles
- To promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security
- The International Labour Organization (ILO) was also created under the Treaty of Versailles as an affiliated agency of the League.
- The League of Nations ceased its activities after failing to prevent the Second World War.

Important Exam related Facts

- The name 'United Nations' - coined by the then U.S. President - Franklin D. Roosevelt
- First used in the Declaration by United Nations of 1 January 1942, during Second World War.
- Original UN logo - created by a team of designers in 1945 - led by Oliver Lincoln Lundquist
- Official languages of UN - Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish

The United Nations System



- All were established in 1945 when the UN was founded

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Main Deliberative, Policymaking and Representative organ of UN
- All 193 members represented in the General Assembly (only UN body with universal representation)
- Located in New York
- Meets each year - in September
- Elects a General Assembly President each year
- **76th General Assembly President Abdulla Shahid (Maldives)**
- Membership of States in UN - by a decision of General Assembly upon recommendation of Security Council

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- **Decisions Making in General Assembly:**
 - Two-Third Majority: on decisions of importance (peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters)
 - Simple Majority: other decisions
- **Sitting arrangements** in the General Assembly Hall changes each session
 - During the 76th Session (2021-2022) - Suriname occupied the first seat in the Hall

Q. Where did the first General Assembly meeting held?

Ans : Westminster Central Hall, London

Security Council

- **Role** - to maintain International peace and security
- Takes lead in determining existence of threat to the peace or act of aggression
- Located in New York
- **Security Council President** - changes every month on rotation
- **Total Members** - 15 (5 permanent and 10 non permanent – for 2 year term).
- Each Member has one vote.
- 5 permanent members - China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States
- A member state of UN which is not a member of Security Council may participate in discussions (without a vote) when the Council considers that country's interests are affected
- **Veto Power:** refers to the power of permanent member to veto (Reject) any resolution of Security Council
- The unconditional veto possessed by the five governments has been seen as the **most undemocratic** character of the UN

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

- UN's central platform for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on sustainable development
- Work towards 3 dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental
- Also responsible for follow-up to major UN conferences and summits
- Members – 54 – for overlapping 3 year terms
- Located in New York
- **Current President - Collen Vixen Kelapile of Botswana**

Trusteeship Council

- It was established to provide International supervision for 11 Trust Territories and to promote their advancement towards self-government or independence
- **Trust territory** - a non-self-governing territory placed under an administrative authority by the Trusteeship Council of UN
- Aims of Trusteeship System got fulfilled by 1994 all Trust Territories attained self-government or independence, either as separate States or by joining neighbouring independent countries
- Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994 - a month after independence of Palau - last remaining UN trust territory
- By a resolution adopted on 25 May 1994 – Trusteeship Council amended its rules of procedure - dropped annual meets and agreed to meet as occasion required

International Court of Justice

- Principal judicial organ of UN
 - **Role:** to settle legal disputes submitted to it by States (in accordance with international law) and to give advisory opinions on legal questions
 - **Composed of** 15 judges, elected for 9 years by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council
 - Its **seat** is at the Peace Palace in the Hague (Netherlands)
 - The only Principal organ of UN not located in New York (USA)
 - Its **official languages** are English and French
 - ICJ is the successor of the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ), which was established by the League of Nations in 1920
 - **President - Joan E. Donoghue**
- From India, Judge Dalveer Bhandari is a member

The Secretariat

- Comprises - Secretary General and tens of thousands of International UN staff members
- Organized along departmental lines, each department/office having distinct action and responsibility
- Appointment of Secretary General - by the General Assembly - for a 5 year, renewable term
- Secretary-General is the Chief Administrative Officer and Head of the Secretariat
- Located in New York
- Current Secretary General of UN: Antonio Guterres
- Ninth Secretary-General
- Took office on 1st January 2017
- Before becoming Secretary General - served as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from June 2005 to December 2015
- Served as Prime Minister of Portugal from 1995 to 2002



Important Facts

- UN and its Secretary-General Kofi Annan were awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 2001
- First Secretary General of UN – Trygve Lie (Norway)
- First Secretary General of UN from African continent – Boutros-Boutros Ghali
- Only Secretary General of UN to have died in office – Dam Hammarskjold
- First Indian to be President of UN General Assembly – Smt. Vijay Laxmi Pandit

Parcham Classes